

**Selectboard Meeting Minutes July 17, 2023 Zoom Teleconference 5:30 pm**

**Call to Order:** Bob Manners called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Others present: Selectboard members Rick LaPierre, Andrew Baker, and Town Administrator Terry Narkewicz.

A motion was put forth by Rick to approve the minutes of June 20 and July 10. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Department Liaison Reports:**

**Pratt Library Committee** – The committee will be meeting later this week.

**Energy Committee** – MassSave will be having new incentives for energy efficient measures for small business owners coming in August. A Mass Save representative will be attending the next “Business After Hours” meeting on July 19.

**FRTA** – The grand opening of their new facility took place recently.

**Memorial hall Association** – The next meeting will be on July 18 when the capital campaign will be discussed.

**Police Department** – Several new policy updates are needed as a result of the merger with Buckland. A place-holding purchase order for a new cruiser is awaiting a vote by a Special Town Meeting later this summer. Two new full-time officers have been hired. Jeffrey Belanger and Chris Pettengill were welcomed to the department; both officers have community policing experience and have previously worked in the area.

**Town Hall** – Rick continues to meet weekly with Terry. He has also met with Treasurer/Collector Angel Bragdon. Rick has requested a list of delinquent taxpayers. Terry said the elevator repair is nearing completion but it must be inspected by that state before it can be used. An additional cost was incurred because once the elevator software was upgraded, the fire alarm software also had to be upgraded.

**Veterans** – Rick has made contact with District Director Chris Demars and has established a line of communication.

**Senior Center** – Two new volunteers have stepped forward. One is a 17-year-old who is willing to assist seniors with using smart phones and tablets. More volunteers are needed especially for the handyperson program.

**Highway Department** – Due to the vast amount of rain, Brook Road and Cooperlane Road have been closed. Dragon Brook jumped its banks twice at the intersection of South Shelburne and Bardwells Ferry Roads. It is hoped that a Hazard Mitigation grant might be obtained to help fix that intersection, numerous other washouts occurred on other roads.

**Appointments:**

**6:00 pm Linda Overing, Breezeway Farm Consulting RE: Public Hearing FY’21 CDBG** – (Mike Carter, GCG Associates; J. Ramos, West County Food Pantry) – The hearing was opened by Bob at 6 pm, for the purpose of receiving public comment on the performances and outcomes of the grant. Projects were Bridge Street Phase 2 Improvements and support of the West County Emergency Food Pantry. The FY’21 grant was funded at \$793,026.

J. Ramos gave the statistics of how many residents were served and how much food was distributed. The number of residents served is expected to grow over the next year. The grant is an important part of the food pantry funding. There were no public comments.

The Bridge Street project went out to bid but even the low bid exceeded grant funds. The town then committed an additional \$118,000 to the project. Due to supply chain issues the work started this past April. Water and sewer lines have been replaced. The initial paving has been done and sidewalks are now being done. Work will resume in September with the final paving and line striping. Andrew commented that it has been a long several years for downtown businesses having to cope with construction disruptions.

The hearing was closed at 6:14 pm.

**6:20 pm Jeff Boettner Energy Committee RE: ARPA Request** – Jeff said the Energy Committee has looked into what other towns are doing regarding streetlights. They learned that 75% of the towns in Massachusetts have taken on their street lights on their own as a cost saving measure. Taking control of the lights gives towns control over the wattage and shielding, something that would not be possible if the Eversource offer is accepted. Real Term Energy is a company that is involved with over 50 Massachusetts towns. The first step for Real Term would be a light assessment, costing \$9,100. Jeff asked if ARPA funds could be used for the initial assessment. Terry said that approximately \$29,000 remained in ARPA funds, with several unknowns possibly needing those funds, including repair of the Town Hall elevator, the emergency generator, and possibly \$10,000 to help match the Commonwealth Spaces grant for the pocket park. Rick was not in favor of using ARPA funds, feeling that money should benefit the entire town, not just the village. He said the Finance Committee did not support using Real Term Energy. John Walsh said he thought it would be premature to spend \$9,100 now, thinking it should go to Town Meeting. Andrew pointed out that the funding was from grants, not by taxation. Rick wanted to take a “reasonable approach” and save the town some energy with an offer that doesn’t commit the town to a long-term lease. Jeff responded that a lease could be as short as three years. He said Green Communities had funded LED lights elsewhere and it might be a funding source for Shelburne. He said there continues to be complaints about the LED lights from Eversource. With Real Term the town could have control over the wattage of the lights and the shielding. Jeff explained that Real Term is a preferred provider which allows them to work directly with communities without going to bid. The \$55,000 cost of conversion using Real Term would include the \$9,100 assessment, the buyout, new bulbs, and shields. Andrew wondered if the assessment could be done by the town, saving the \$9,100. Bob’s primary concern was the tightness of the ARPA funds given some of the unknown costs that are pending with other projects. Jeff asked if the Energy Committee could somehow get the \$9,100, would it be allowed to do the assessment and get more exact numbers. A motion was made by Rick to not approve the use of ARPA funds for the \$9,100 assessment and to proceed with the offer from Eversource for changing the lights. This was seconded by Bob. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Rick – yes; Andrew – no. Motion passed 2-1-0. Laurie Wheeler commented that a lot of people had worked on the effort to provide an alternative to Eversource and she had hoped that effort would have been seen. John Walsh felt the motion was not valid, taking the vote on funding and adding an addendum. He thought the Board should wait for the Energy Committee’s report, which the agenda indicates was tabled until August 1. Rick felt the Energy Committee’s report was in hand, while Jeff said what was presented was only for the purpose of asking for ARPA funds. It was not the final report. Cynthia Boettner said people would be upset to learn that a decision was made tonight on anything other than funding, without anyone being aware that it was up for discussion. Terry wondered if the Energy Committee could apply to Green Communities for full funding, including the funds for the assessment. Andrew suggested another option would be to see if there are ARPA funds remaining after the other projects are completed. Bob said he had

heard from people in rural Shelburne about wondering why they had to pay for lights that would only benefit the village. Cynthia responded that everyone will be sharing the cost of the town's electric bill. John Walsh repeated that he believed the Board would be violating the Open Meeting Law by voting on something that was not on the agenda. Streetlights are listed on the agenda, but it also states that the topic is tabled until August 1. Bob said he would be willing to discuss the Energy Committee's report at the August 14 Board meeting but cautioned that it would not be a public hearing and he would not let it turn into a free for all. A motion was put forth by Andrew to strike the part of the previous vote regarding moving ahead with Eversource, waiting until after the Energy Committee final report is received. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

### **Old Business:**

**Streetlights** – See appointments, above.

**Cowell Gym HVAC Project** (John Walsh) – John reported to the four outside compressors have been delivered and that two of them are being plumbed. There were some challenges in getting through the foundation but they have been overcome. Heads for all the units are in place and are in the gym, office, lobby, food bank area, clothing exchange area, basement, and the two equipment rooms. The project is expected to be complete in two or three weeks Each head unit will have its own thermostat control, with a master control in the director's office. The master control will set limits on the amount of heating and cooling.

**Pocket Park Project, 19 Bridge Street** – Waiting to hear the outcome of the Commonwealth Spaces grant application.

**West County Senior Services District Board of Managers Appointees** – Postcards are being sent out urging people in the three towns to volunteer for the Board of Managers.

**Franklin County Tech School District Representative** – Dr. Robert Miller had sent a letter of interest and has now been appointed to the district committee. He was welcomed and thanked by Bob.

**Relocation of Veteran's Memorial** – Nothing new to report.

**Newsletter Guidelines** – Rick felt the town would be remiss if it had no guidelines and had sent a list of eight suggested guidelines to the Board. Andrew wondered, since the newsletter is without an editor, why discuss this now. Rick felt a new editor might want to know the guidelines. Bob agreed that perhaps the newsletter might go dormant for a while, but it couldn't hurt to have guidelines in place.

At 7:45 Bob had to leave the meeting. Andrew, as Vice Chair, took over. It was decided to table further discussion of newsletter guidelines.

### **New Business:**

**Andrew Baker RE: Disclosure of Appearance of Conflict of Interest** – tabled.

**Community Preservation Act Committee** – tabled.

**Selectboard Representation on Town Boards & Committees MGL Chapter 268A, section 21A** – tabled.

**Tricia Yacovone-Biagi RE: Resignation as Editor of Town Newsletter** – Rick said that as Tricia was never officially appointed by the town there was no need to accept her resignation. All that would be needed was to acknowledge her work as a volunteer. Andrew agreed and added his appreciation for her work.

**Tom Williams, Emergency Management RE: Staff Training – September 14, 2023** – Tom was asking permission to schedule two segments of training, one in the daytime, one in the evening, for town employees and staff in emergency response. The Board supported the request.

**Jennifer Pease RE: Use of Pocket Park for Bridge Dinner** – Permission was asked to set up tables for the caterers at the pocket park. She also asked permission to set up a table and a tent in front of The Optician for ticket sales. The Board did not want the sidewalk blocked and preferred that both the caterers and the ticket sales take place at the pocket park.

**Laurie Wheeler, Arms Library RE: Mosaic Inlay in Sidewalk Near Arms** – Mike Carter said the construction crew was aware of the request to install a mosaic near the tree adjacent to the library. He thought that sand and salt would destroy it quite easily. Linda Overing thought the CDBG funder would be concerned if the mosaic would affect handicap accessibility and thought it would void the contractor's warranty, making it the town's responsibility. Laure said the mosaic would not interfere with the permeability around the tree, she realized it would suffer wear and tear, the artist has done similar things in many places, and the highway superintendent said it wouldn't interfere with his work. Andrew suggested an alternate site, but the concrete for that has already been poured. Rick was concerned about the issues mentioned above and didn't think it was prudent. Bob thought it was a nice project, but not the best fit for that location. A motion was put forth by Rick to not approve the request for a mosaic near the Arms Library. Roll call vote: Andrew –yes; Bob – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Chief Bardwell RE: Adoption of Three New Department Policies, Body Worn Cameras; Detective; Electrical Weapons – TASER** – tabled.

**Any Other Business:** None

**Next Meeting** – The next Board meeting will be on July 31, 2023, at 5:30 pm.

**Correspondence:** None

**Public Comment:**

Cynthia Boettner said the Energy Committee has received a grant to help residents and small businesses connect with MassSave programs. During the last two weeks of August a company, Energy Resources, will be doing energy assessments in town for small businesses including farms, houses of worship, and non-profits. There will be a meeting to provide further information on this on July 19<sup>th</sup> at Catamount Traders.

**Adjournment:** At 7:55 a motion was made by Rick to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Andrew – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
Faye Whitney, Recording Secretary